DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 476 953 PS 031 294

AUTHOR	Bella, Jill; Bloom, Paula Jorde
TITLE	Zoom: The Impact of Early Childhood Leadership Training on Role Perceptions, Job Performance, and Career Decisions.
INSTITUTION	National-Louis Univ., Wheeling, IL. Center for Early Childhood Leadership.
SPONS AGENCY	McCormick Tribune Foundation, Chicago, IL.; Illinois State Dept. of Human Services, Springfield.
PUB DATE	2003-05-00
NOTE	49p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Center for Early Childhood Leadership, National-Louis University, 6310 Capitol Drive, Wheeling, IL 60090-7201. Tel: 800-443-5522, ext. 7703 (Toll Free); Fax: 847-465-5910; Web site: http://www.nl.edu/cecl.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Evaluative (142)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS
DESCRIPTORS	Administrator Attitudes; *Administrator Role; *Administrators; Career Planning; Competence; *Early Childhood Education; Empowerment; Job Performance; *Leadership Training; Models; *Professional Development; Self Esteem; *Teacher Leadership; Training Methods

ABSTRACT

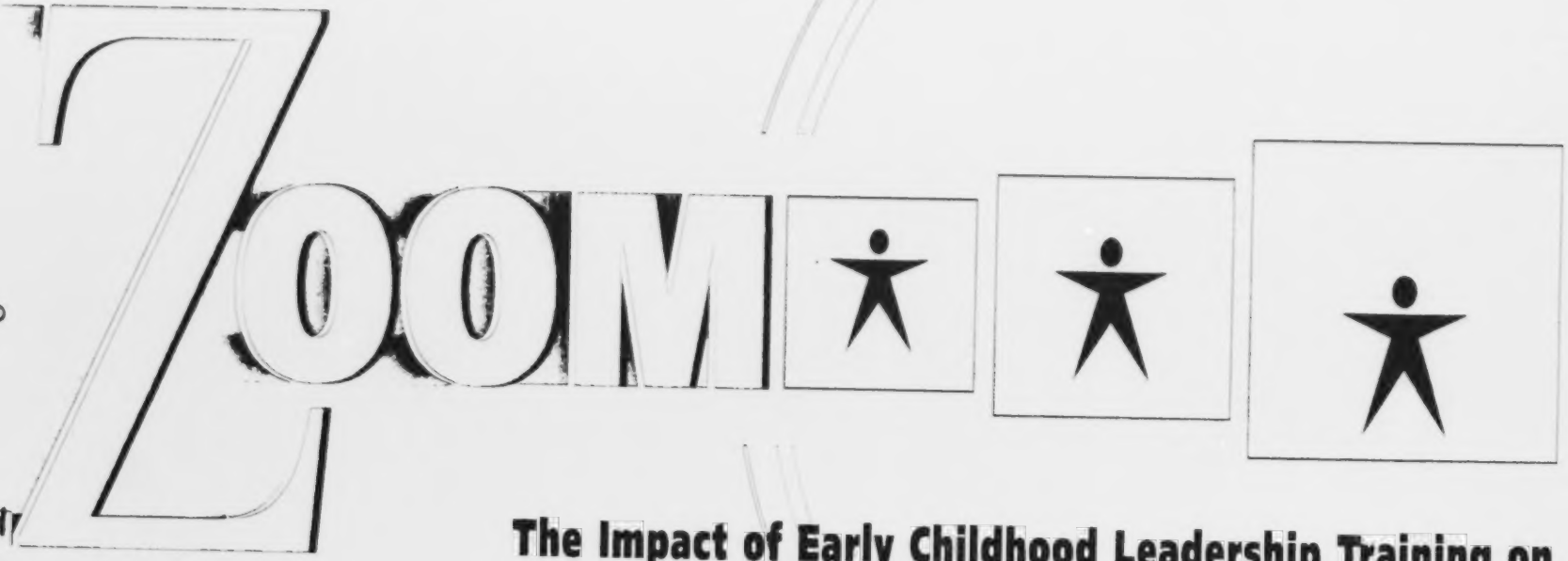
Using the photographic concept of zoom as a metaphor for the goals of leadership training as well as the personal transformation that occurs within individuals who engage in professional development to enhance their leadership capacity, this study took a focused look at 182 individuals participating in two models of early childhood leadership training to assess the impact of such training on their role perceptions, job performance, and career decisions. The first model was a 2-year program involving 34 hours of coursework and on-site technical assistance to achieve NAEYC center accreditation. The second model entailed 110 clock hours of instruction and technical assistance over 10 months. Findings revealed that leadership training resulted in heightened empowerment and self-esteem that transformed perceptions of the administrative role. Perceptions of competency correlated more strongly with educational level than years of experience in the field or as an administrator. Individuals participating in both training models indicated that the experience gave them a new perspective on their administrative role and better enabled them to see themselves and their programs in the context of their community and their profession. Participants noted that four skill clusters had especially helped them in their management and leadership roles: interpersonal communication, group facilitation, decision making, and staff development. Eighty-six percent of participants continue to work in the field of early childhood and virtually all reported that their leadership training experience served as a stepping-stone to other professional development opportunities. The findings of the study underscore the need for systematic, intensive, and relevant training focused on the unique needs of early childhood directors. (KB)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 476 953

PS 031294

BEST COPY AVAILABLE



The Impact of Early Childhood Leadership Training on Role Perceptions, Job Performance, and Career Decisions

Jill Bella and Paula Jorde Bloom

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Eileen Eisenberg

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

Zoom

The Impact of Early Childhood Leadership Training on Role Perceptions, Job Performance, and Career Decisions

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS

Jill Bella

Paula Jorde Bloom

FUNDED BY

The McCormick Tribune Foundation

The Illinois Department of Human Services

May 2003

Copyright © 2003, The Center for Early Childhood Leadership
All rights reserved. No part of this report may be used or reproduced without permission.

Layout and design: Burkat Design

Photography: Paula Jorde Bloom, Eileen Eisenberg

Printed in the U.S.A. by Commercial Lithographers

The Center for Early Childhood Leadership
National-Louis University
6310 Capitol Drive
Wheeling, IL 60090-7201
(800) 443-5522, ext. 7703
www.nl.edu/cecl

The opinions expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the McCormick Tribune Foundation or the Illinois Department of Human Services.

Acknowledgements

This research was made possible by the generous support of the McCormick Tribune Foundation and the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS). We are especially grateful to Dr. Wanda Newell of the McCormick Tribune Foundation and Holly Knicker from IDHS for their commitment to program evaluation and their valuable insights in the design of this study. The faculty and staff of the Center for Early Childhood Leadership have been involved in every facet of this research from helping to define the scope of the study to collecting data and editing the final report. Special thanks to Angelique Chavez, Eileen Eisenberg, Karen May, and Teri Talan, for the various roles they played in the data collection process. Thanks also to Joan Frankel for her assistance in the design of the instruments and to Donna Rafanello for reviewing and editing the final report. Finally, we extend deep appreciation to the participants of the McCormick Fellows Leadership Training Program and the Taking Charge of Change Leadership Training Program who generously gave of their time to complete surveys and participate in telephone interviews.

About the Center

The Center for Early Childhood Leadership at National-Louis University is dedicated to enhancing the management skills, professional orientation, and leadership capacity of early childhood administrators. The activities of the Center encompass four areas: training to improve the knowledge base, skills, and competencies of directors who administer early childhood programs; technical assistance to improve program quality; research on key professional development issues; and public awareness of the critical role that early childhood directors play in the provision of quality services for children and families.

CONTENTS

Executive Summary 1

Introduction 3

- Two models of leadership training 3
- Research questions 4

Methodology 6

- Instrumentation and data collection procedures 6
- Sample 7

Zooming In: What Did We Find Out? 8

- Job status—Then and now 8
- Training outcomes 11
- Continuing professional development 18
- Design and delivery of training 20

Zooming Out: What Does This Mean? 22

- Role perceptions 22
- Job performance 24
- Career decisions 26

A Final Word 29

Endnotes 30

Tables

1. Background Characteristics of Respondents 7
2. Program Type and Legal Auspices 9
3. Directors' Perceptions of Critical Administrative Issues 10
4. Respondents' Perceptions of Their Leadership Training Experience 12
5. Accreditation Status 18
6. Level of Knowledge About Different Professional Development Initiatives 19

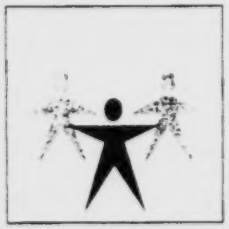
Figures

1. Current Job Status 8
2. Directors' Perceived Level of Competency 15

Appendices

A. Leadership Training Models 33
B. Cover letter and Leadership Impact Survey 36
C. Interview questions 40

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The concept of zoom provides a wonderful metaphor for the goals of leadership training as well as the personal transformation that takes place within individuals who engage in professional development to enhance their leadership capacity. This study took a focused look at 182 individuals who participated in two different models of leadership training between 1993 and 2003 to assess the impact of leadership training on their role perceptions, job performance, and career decisions.

The McCormick Fellows Leadership Training Program is a two-year program involving 34 semester hours of graduate-level coursework and on-site technical assistance to achieve NAEYC center accreditation. Taking Charge of Change is a more streamlined leadership training program of approximately 110 clock hours of instruction and technical assistance over 10 months.

Role Perceptions

Both on the self-report questionnaire and in follow-up interviews, individuals repeatedly talked about the sense of empowerment they felt when they completed their leadership training and how that heightened sense of self-esteem literally transformed how they viewed their administrative role. These heightened feelings of self-efficacy have been sustained since they completed their training, empowering them to assume new challenges they would not have had the confidence to do otherwise.

Data regarding changes in directors' perceptions of personal competency provide strong evidence of this transformation. When directors begin Taking Charge of Change, most (90%) rate themselves as a novice or capable director. Only 10% rate themselves as a master director. This study revealed that fully 50% of the directors now view themselves as master directors.

An additional statistical analysis was conducted to discern the background variables that correlate strongly with perceptions of competency. The results of the analysis revealed that perceptions of competency correlate more strongly with level of education than years of experience in the field or years of experience in an administrative role.

Zooming in and out and shifting focus while maintaining position is something leaders must be able to do on many different levels. Individuals who participated in both training models say the experience gave them a new perspective on their administrative role. The lens with which they previously viewed themselves was limited in scope, concentrating mostly on the details or nitty-gritty management issues of administering a program. They are now able to step back and take a broader view—the vision of what they want their programs to become. Training helped them see themselves and their programs more clearly in the context of their community and in the context of the early childhood profession.

Job Performance

The results from this study show that respondents strongly agree that leadership training improved their management skills, helped them become more reflective about their leadership behavior, and provided them with concrete resources to perform their jobs better. Participants noted four clusters of skills, in particular, that had helped them in their management and leadership roles: interpersonal communication skills, group facilitation skills (mostly conducting effective meetings), decision-making skills (particularly participative management), and staff development skills.

Many of the respondents indicated that the training had revealed just how much they did not know about effective supervision and the dynamics of organizational leadership. This sense of "conscious incompetence" was not a discouraging realization, however. To the contrary, it served as a stimulus to learn more and to become more accomplished in their administrative role.

While staff turnover appears to have decreased during the past decade, difficulty in recruiting qualified staff remains a nettlesome problem for many directors. Inadequate physical space and too much paperwork also remain troublesome issues for directors. The current economic climate is creating a new issue for directors. One-third of directors cite uncertain funding as a critical administrative issue and 18% note low enrollment as a major concern.

The data regarding changes in the accreditation status of their centers speak directly to the organizational changes that individuals have made as a result of their participation in leadership training. Data show that only 20% of the programs were accredited when participants began their training. Today, 43% of the current directors' programs are accredited. This contrasts sharply with the overall 10% accredited figure for the state. It is clear the training has an impact on increasing participants' awareness of the importance of accreditation and assisting them with resources and support to make it happen.

Career Decisions

Perhaps the most encouraging data resulting from this study relates to career decisions. Of the 182 respondents in this study, 156 (86%) continue to work in the field of early childhood either as a director of a center-based program or in a related position supporting children and families. Sixty-five percent of this group continues to work for the same organization they worked for when they participated in the training. Fully 97% of the directors of center-based programs plan to be working in the field early childhood five years from now.

Individuals who are not currently directing a program but continue to work in the field, left their previous positions either because of a desire for greater influence or the need for greater challenge. Of the 26 people who left the field of early childhood, 15 of them retired, had an illness, or took a hiatus from full-time employment to raise young children.

An equally promising development is the number of individuals who have gone on to take additional college coursework. Only 19% of the respondents had an advanced degree when they enrolled in the leadership training; 46% currently have a master's or doctorate. Forty-two percent of those with associate or bachelor's degrees report that they are enrolled in a degree program.

Those not pursuing formal coursework at the undergraduate or graduate level gave several reasons why they are not. The most often cited reasons included the cost of tuition, work demands, and time.

Virtually all of the participants indicated that their leadership training experience served as a stepping-stone to other professional development opportunities. For participants, the networking possibilities that resulted from participating in a cohort of participants from diverse program auspices was an important catalyst for career growth and ongoing professional development.

The rich empirical and anecdotal evidence from respondents provides compelling evidence of how leadership training can change the early childhood profession from the inside out and from the bottom up, through changes in early childhood educators themselves. The results of this study underscore the need for systematic, intensive, and relevant training focused on the unique needs of early childhood directors.

INTRODUCTION

Strong leadership is a vital component of any thriving organization.[1] Similar to the zoom lens of a camera, leaders must be able to shift from one perspective to another, viewing the same situation from different vantage points when making decisions, building systems, mentoring colleagues, evaluating actions, and serving as agents of change. This means having the capacity to step back and look at the big picture to determine the impact of different actions, while simultaneously being cognizant of the small details that influence people's reactions to any event.

In early childhood organizations strong leadership is particularly critical because directors are the gatekeepers to quality. They are the ones responsible for creating the climate that promotes optimal growth and development of children as well as implementing the systems to ensure that quality is maintained.[2] Over the past decade, an emerging body of research has provided strong evidence documenting the effect of leadership training on indicators of classroom quality and a center's overall organizational climate.[3] Data are sparse, however, in documenting the long-term outcomes of training on participants' role perceptions, job performance, and subsequent career decisions. This study was designed to fill that void.

While there is consensus among policymakers and practitioners alike about the importance of strong leadership in early childhood programs, few states have made leadership training a high priority in the implementation of their career development systems. Illinois stands out as a notable exception. For the past ten years, the state has served as a shining example of a focused investment in the professional development of leaders of early childhood organizations. Illinois has implemented the most comprehensive and rigorous director credential in the country, and it has forged public and private partnerships that have provided needed funding for leadership training. Two of the most well known training initiatives are the McCormick Fellows Leadership Training Program and the Taking Charge of Change Leadership Training Program.

Two Models of Leadership Training

Since 1985, the Center for Early Childhood Leadership has been involved in the professional development of early childhood leaders.[4] While the Center offers a number of different training initiatives, from one-day management institutes to complete master's degree programs, two of the training models offered by the Center have received considerable attention as possible prototypes for leadership training for early childhood administrators. The following is a brief description of these two training models. Appendix A provides a more complete description of each model.

The McCormick Fellows Leadership Training Program, funded by the McCormick Tribune Foundation, provided two years of graduate-level leadership training to 30 directors of center-based programs in Chicago. McCormick Fellows met weekly for four hours, engaged in on-site program improvements to achieve center accreditation, and conducted a research project documenting their efforts. At the culmination of the program, McCormick Fellows received an M.Ed. in Early Childhood Administration from National-Louis University.[5]

Taking Charge of Change (TCC), currently funded by the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS), is a more streamlined leadership training program where participants receive approximately 110 contact hours of training and technical assistance over a 10-month period.[6] With the support of a mentor, each participant develops a Program Improvement Plan and documents progress in

achieving desired organizational changes. At the culmination of the training, participants receive six semester hours of college credit. Since 1993, a total of 258 individuals in ten cohorts have completed Taking Charge of Change.

Data on training outcomes have been collected at the end of each cohort of McCormick Fellows and Taking Charge of Change, including measures of participant satisfaction and changes in their perceived level of knowledge and skill. In addition, pre and post measures of organizational climate documenting staffs' perceptions of the quality of work life and pre and post measures of classroom teaching practices have also been conducted.[7] These data have provided rich documentation of training outcomes as well as useful information for refining the curriculum. Now after a decade, it is important to take a more comprehensive and retrospective look at what has happened to the individuals who have participated in these two training initiatives. The decade benchmark also provides a convenient time to document lessons learned and best practices in the design and delivery of leadership training that may be useful to other entities engaged in similar professional development endeavors.

Research Questions

The research questions guiding this study were clustered into four areas: 1) current job status and motivations for staying or in leaving the field; 2) perceived short- and long-term outcomes from having participated in leadership training; 3) subsequent professional development experiences and knowledge of professional development resources; and 4) feedback on the design and delivery of training.

Job status—Then and now. Given the high rate of turnover in the field of early childhood, it was important to determine the current status of individuals who had participated in training. Were they still center directors, or had they left the field to pursue other interests? If they remained in the field but changed positions, what factors prompted their decision to change jobs?

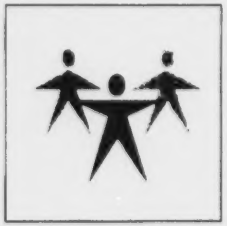
Training outcomes. Data collected at the end of each cohort documented statistically significant changes in participants' perceived level of knowledge and skill as well as enhanced feelings of self-efficacy, confidence, and appreciation for the importance of their

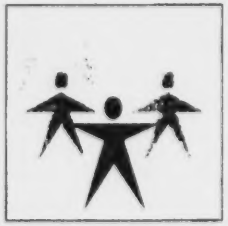
leadership role. This study sought to determine if those feelings of personal empowerment were sustained after the training. In other words, did participants' personal image of themselves as more enlightened leaders translate into greater effectiveness on the job? What concrete, specific changes have individuals been able to make in their early childhood programs or in their communities as a result of the training they received? What aspects of the training content have they found most helpful in their personal and professional roles? Did they feel that their participation in the training had a positive impact on their career decisions?

Continuing professional development. One of the goals in the various states' emerging career development systems is to professionalize the early childhood workforce by providing opportunities for individuals to gain college credit for training. This has been the rationale behind the awarding of college credit for both the McCormick Fellows Leadership Training Program and the Taking Charge of Change Leadership Training Program. This study sought to determine if the awarding of college credit and connecting individuals to professional development resources served as an incentive or impetus for them to continue formal college coursework. Further, have participants encouraged the teachers in their programs to pursue formal coursework? And how knowledgeable are the graduates of these leadership training programs about current professional development initiatives in Illinois such as Great START and T.E.A.C.H? How knowledgeable are they about the Illinois Director Credential? [8]

Design and delivery of training. A final set of questions targeted in this study had to do with the models that were used in the design and delivery of the leadership training. The approaches between the two models were quite different: one was a comprehensive model that entailed weekly interactions with participants and focused intervention on-site at their respective programs over a two-year period; the other a more streamlined, less intense (and thus less costly) approach to training taking place over a period of one year. Both models are grounded in a similar philosophical orientation based on the principles of adult development and experiential learning. Both are delivered in a cohort format. This retrospective evaluation of the training experience from the participants' perspective helps to identify the components of the training models that most contributed to personal and professional change. This information should be beneficial in supporting other funding entities as they seek to implement early childhood leadership training in other states or communities.

METHODOLOGY





Instrumentation and Data Collection Procedures

In November 2002, a letter and three-page self-report questionnaire were sent to all 278 individuals who participated in either the McCormick Fellows Leadership Training Program or the Taking Charge of Change Leadership Training Program from 1993 to 2003. (Ten individuals participated in both programs.) In January 2003, the survey was mailed again to those individuals who had not yet responded. Ten surveys were returned as undeliverable. A total of 182 completed surveys were returned, representing a 68% response rate.

On the questionnaire, respondents were asked to identify one of three categories that characterized their current job status: 1) currently a director of a center-based program; 2) no longer a director but still working in the field of early childhood; or 3) no longer working in the field of early childhood. After identifying the category that characterized their current job status, respondents were directed to complete specific sections of the survey. Two sections (A and F) were completed by all participants.

Part A of the questionnaire included demographic information about the individual: current job title, years of experience, age, gender, race/ethnicity, and educational level. Part B included questions about their career decisions—how many job changes they had made since the training, the reasons for those changes, and did they anticipate working in the field of early childhood five years from now? Part C was intended for those individuals who had indicated that they had left the field of early childhood education. It included a question about the person's reason(s) for leaving the field. Part D of the questionnaire, designed for current directors, requested background information about their center—legal auspices, size, turnover, and accreditation status. Part E, also designed for current directors, requested information about their role perceptions, knowledge about current professional development initiatives in Illinois, the critical administrative issues they faced when they took part in leadership training, and the critical administrative issues they face now. Part F included information about the individual's experience in leadership training, the changes they have made in their program and their community, and their personal and professional achievements since completing the training.

Appendix B is a copy of the cover letter and questionnaire. The version included in this appendix is for Taking Charge of Change participants. A similar version was used for those who participated in the McCormick Fellows Program.

At the end of the questionnaire, individuals were asked if they would be willing to take part in a follow-up telephone interview of approximately 20 minutes. Of the 137 respondents who indicated that they would be willing to be contacted, interviews were conducted with 104 people.[9] Interviews took place between February and April 2003. Respondents' answers to the interview questions were transcribed. Content analysis was then done on the data to determine patterns and themes emerging from the different questions. Appendix C is a copy of the interview questions.

Ms. Jill Bella, the principal investigator for this study, oversaw the data collection and interview process. Ms. Bella was not involved as an instructor or mentor in either the McCormick Fellows Leadership Training Program or the Taking Charge of Change Leadership Training Program.

Sample

Of the 182 respondents who completed surveys, 106 (58%) continue to work as directors of center-based early care and education programs; 50 (28%) are no longer directors but continue to work in the field of early childhood; and 26 (14%) are no longer working in the field of early childhood. Respondents averaged 18 years of experience in early childhood education and 11 years of administrative experience. Age of respondents ranged from 25 to 72 years with an average age of 45 years. Background characteristics for gender, race/ethnicity, and highest level of education are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Background Characteristics of Respondents (N = 182)

	f	%
Gender		
Male	9	5
Female	173	95
Race/ethnicity		
African-American	34	19
Asian	1	1
Caucasian	139	76
Hispanic/Latino	5	3
Other	3	1
Education level		
High School/GED	2	1
Associate's degree	25	14
Baccalaureate degree	71	39
Master's degree	79	43
Advanced/Doctoral	5	3

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ZOOMING IN: WHAT DID WE FIND OUT?

This chapter summarizes the results of the data analysis as it relates to the four clusters of research questions explored in this study: 1) current job status and motivations for staying in or leaving the field; 2) perceived short- and long-term outcomes from having participated in leadership training; 3) continuing professional development experiences and knowledge of professional development resources; and 4) feedback on the design and delivery of training.

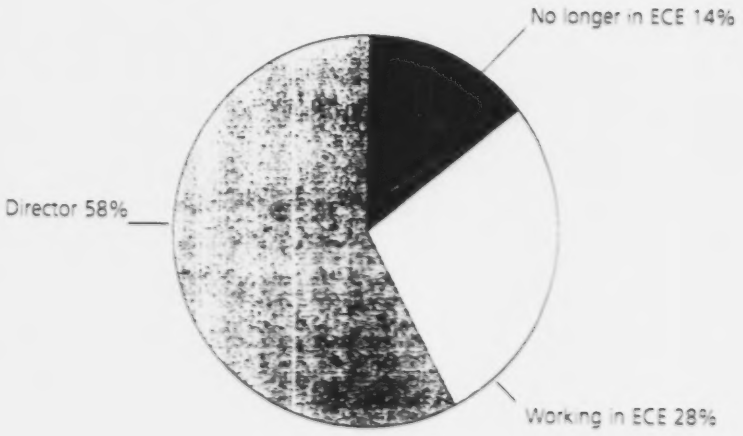
Job Status—Then and Now

The target audience for both the McCormick Fellows Leadership Training Program and Taking Charge of Change is directors of center-based programs. Thus, the vast majority of individuals participating in these programs (74%) designated this as their primary role when they first registered in the program. Those who were not directors held other administrative positions in their respective organizations (e.g., Head Start education coordinator, family services coordinator, and school-age or infant/toddler coordinator).

Today, more than half of the respondents (58%) indicate that they are still directors of center-based programs. Those who have remained in the field, but not in a directorship role (28%) hold a variety of other positions (e.g., agency executive director, parent educator, regional manager, site supervisor, professional association executive director, independent consultant, college instructor). Of the 156 individuals who are still working in early childhood education either as a director or in a related role, 102 (65%) continue to work for the same organization they worked for when they participated in the training. Of this group, 98 respondents indicate they have the same title as when they participated in the training.

The remaining 26 individuals (14%) who have left the field of early childhood hold a variety of positions (e.g., church clerk, administrative assistant, enrollment representative, grant writer, elementary school principal, project coordinator, social worker, video producer). Fifteen of these individuals indicated retirement, illness, or the desire to stay home with young children as their reasons for leaving the field. Figure 1 provides a graphic distribution of the sample regarding their current job status.

Figure 1. Current Job Status (N = 182)



On the self-report questionnaire, respondents were asked if their participation in leadership training had a positive influence on their decision to stay in the field. Although more than two-thirds of respondents agreed with this statement, individuals also indicated that factors other than training weighed heavily in the career

decision-making equation. These factors include salary and benefits associated with different career options, satisfaction with their current job, agency support, and personal factors (e.g., support of one's spouse).

Currently a director of a center-based program. While the majority of respondents remain directors of early care and education programs, approximately 23 individuals (22%) no longer work for the same organization or agency they worked for when they participated in the training. Directors who changed jobs since participating in training indicate the following factors as most influencing their decision to change jobs:

- need for a greater challenge (39%)
- disillusionment with the organizat on (35%)
- increase in salary (23%)
- desire for greater influence (19%)
- better work schedule (16%)

The level of commitment to their profession appears quite strong. Of those respondents who remain in a directorship role, fully 97% see themselves as continuing to work in early childhood five years from now.

The 106 respondents who currently work as directors of early care and education programs administer centers with enrollments ranging from 8 to 480 children (M = 120) and supervise both small and large staffs (from 1 to 86 employees). These center characteristics have remained fairly constant from when the directors enrolled in the leadership training. Staff turnover, however, appears to have decreased over the years with directors reporting a mean annual turnover rate of only 12%. One-fifth of the directors indicate that they had no staff turnover during the past 12 months.

Table 2 summarizes center characteristics regarding program type and legal auspices. As noted in this table, approximately one-third of the programs are for-profit; two-thirds are nonprofit. Ninety-six percent of the programs are licensed. The remaining four percent are license-exempt.

Table 2. Program Type and Legal Auspices

	f	%
Program type/legal auspices		
For-profit private proprietary or partnership	23	23
For-profit corporation or chain (e.g., Kindercare, Children's World)	7	7
For-profit corporate-sponsored (e.g., Bright Horizons)	5	5
Private nonprofit (independent or affiliated with a social service agency)	31	30
Public nonprofit (e.g., public school, park district)	14	14
Faith-based	6	6
Head Start	9	8
University- or college-affiliated program	7	7

Note: n = 102, data were not provided for four of the programs

Directors were asked to select from a list of ten possibilities the two most critical issues they faced when they enrolled in leadership training and the two most critical issues they currently confront in

their administrative role. Table 3 reports these data for participants completing their training by 2000 (n=70). It summarizes the four most frequently cited issues then and now and the percentage of directors noting each issue.

Table 3. Directors' Perceptions of Critical Administrative Issues

Then	Now
• Difficulty recruiting qualified staff (51%)	• Uncertain funding (38%)
• Staff turnover (30%)	• Difficulty recruiting qualified staff (32%)
• Lack of support from supervisor/agency (19%)	• Inadequate physical space (22%)
• Inadequate physical space (19%)	• Too much paperwork (18%)
• Too much paperwork (17%)	• Low enrollment (18%)

Difficulty in recruiting qualified staff, inadequate physical space, and the paperwork demands of the administrative role have been troublesome issues for directors throughout the past decade. Now it appears the current economic climate may be creating a new set of critical issues for directors to address. One-third of directors cite uncertain funding as a critical administrative issue and 18% note low enrollment as a major concern.

No longer a director, but working in the field of early childhood. As noted earlier, 28% of the 182 respondents indicated that they no longer work as a center director, but continue to work in the field of early childhood. The variety of positions these individuals have taken is as varied as the field itself—accreditation facilitator, college instructor, resource and referral specialist, and regional manager for corporate-sponsored programs. This study focused on the respondents' motivations for their job changes and the level of fulfillment they are experiencing in their new positions.

On the self-report questionnaire, respondents cited several motivations for getting out of the day-to-day administration of an early childhood program and taking on other positions in the field of early childhood. The three most frequently cited motivations were:

- Desire for greater influence (29%)
- Need for greater challenge (20%)
- Disillusionment with the organization (18%)

In the follow-up interviews with the individuals in this category, virtually all indicated that they felt their new jobs represented career advancement.

> *Now I feel I am having more of an impact on the field as a whole. I'm taking my skills as an administrator and my education and putting those to use at a level that is having a greater impact on people.* (Karen Bruning)

> *Before I was a supervisor of teachers; now I supervise other directors.* (Jeanette Kreider)

> *I switched jobs because I was getting burned out and bored. I felt the need to do something else. In the job I have now I receive more money and I have more responsibility.* (Peggy Dohr)

> *I am still in early childhood, but as a facilitator I have a better salary, more responsibility, and more influence. I now have a master's degree and am getting ready to pursue a doctorate. I have touched many lives.* (Sharon Gibson)

For one-third of the respondents in this category, leaving the directorship of their center resulted in a very smooth transition of leadership. For another third, the transition was characterized as very frustrating and chaotic. In these instances, respondents noted

that even though systems were in place, their agency human resources office or their center's governing board did not post the replacement position in a timely manner or an acting director was not identified quickly enough to ensure a smooth transition.

Like the respondents who continue to work as a director, the 50 individuals who remain in early childhood but are no longer in an administrative role directing a center, exhibit a strong commitment to their profession. Ninety-three percent see themselves as continuing to work in the field of early childhood five years from now.

No longer working in the field of early childhood. Twenty-six of those surveyed (14%) no longer work in the field of early childhood education. These individuals were asked to describe what considerations prompted their career exit. The most often cited reasons were:

- parenthood (25%)
- move or relocation (21%)
- disillusionment with organization (17%)
- increase in salary (17%)
- need for greater challenge (17%)
- retirement (17%)

The comments and personal stories from this group of respondents were quite varied. A few were currently unemployed and feeling discouraged by their present circumstances; others had moved on to other roles in social service agencies; and a few remained in education but worked with older children.

I'm now a full-time mom with four children. With four children, child care is just too expensive. (Elizabeth Ackerman)

A job offer came for more money for a position that was intriguing. I needed a change. I was burned out. (Susan Levenhagen)

There were no benefits, I was receiving a low salary, and I was ready to work with a different age group. (Linda Hastings)

I moved to Charlotte, North Carolina. The job market in Charlotte is much smaller. Most child care centers are in churches. The field is not as professional, not to say they are not quality programs, but room for advancement is limited. (Megan Blackburn)

The training provided such a wonderful foundation of positive leadership. Even if I don't get back into the [early childhood] field, I feel the leadership principles I learned are transferable. (Pat Meeker)

Training Outcomes

The evaluation reports compiled over the past decade at the culmination of each leadership training cohort have provided wonderful anecdotes about the personal transformation participants have experienced as the result of training—most deeply, a sense of personal empowerment and a recommitment to the vital work they do. These reports have also documented the specific changes that participants made at their centers. This study sought to determine if the feelings of personal empowerment that participants experienced during the training were sustained and if the organizational improvements initiated during the training cycle were maintained or even expanded.

Perceptions of personal change. On the self-report questionnaire, respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement (1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree) with four statements relating to their perceptions of personal change as the result of participating in the McCormick Fellows Leadership Training Program or Taking Charge of Change. Table 4 summarizes the mean scores by current job status and for the entire sample. The data show that respondents strongly agreed that the training improved their

leadership and management skills, helped them feel more confident in their administrative role, helped them become more self-reflective about their leadership behavior, and gave them concrete resources to help them perform their jobs better.

Table 4. Respondents' Perceptions of Their Leadership Training Experience (N = 182)

	Current Job Status			
	Director M	No longer a director, but working in ECE M	No longer working in ECE M	**Total Sample** M
As a result of the training, my leadership and management skills improved.	4.50	4.52	4.54	4.51
As a result of the training, I felt more confident in my administrative role.	4.58	4.56	4.35	4.54
As a result of the training, I became more self-reflective about my leadership behavior.	4.57	4.40	4.50	4.51
The training provided me with concrete resources to perform my job better.	4.54	4.66	4.54	4.57

Note: 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree

The 104 individuals who were interviewed were asked what specific leadership skills they acquired during the training have helped them most in their personal and professional lives. Content analysis of the responses revealed four clusters of skills: interpersonal communication skills, group facilitation skills, decision-making skills, and staff development skills. The following quotes capture some of the respondents' reflections:

The number one most important thing I learned was to listen to different points of view. This has helped me immensely. I really put into practice the quote we learned, "Seek first to understand, then to be understood." I learned to slow down and listen, and how important it is to get to know the players before you give the agenda. (Kathy Hardy)

For me, the most important skill I learned was learning to listen to my staff and parents and try to think of things from their perspective. (Doris Knuth)

The decision-making piece was empowering along with learning how important it is to make everyone involved in decisions. Learning about personality types and individual differences was also very important. (Gigi Bowie)

My staff meetings have positively changed as a result of what I learned about shared decision-making and participatory management techniques. (Michelle Denton)

My biggest paradigm shift was learning what a paradigm shift was. (Bonnie Buonicore)

The skills relating to staff development helped me the most. I have implemented many of the concepts. The information about training has stuck with me. People learn in different styles and I needed to vary the ways that I do training. (Sara Brandt-Beach)

Participatory management and facilitating effective meetings helped me the most. The training not only gave me the tools, but we explored why it was important. As I learned more about myself and about

my leadership style, I was able to appreciate myself more. I'm more effective with my team now. (Amy Allen)

As a result of the training I learned the skills necessary to make changes to teacher portfolios, classroom environments, orientation, and training modules. (Debra Hahn)

In addition to specific skill building, virtually all individuals who were interviewed spoke of a heightened sense of self-esteem, a greater confidence, and a stronger sense of self-efficacy as a result of participating in the leadership training. Many had not perceived themselves to be leaders before attending the training, but left with an overwhelming sense of awe at the importance of their role and the power and potential of their position to do good. A strong theme of social justice was woven through their comments. These directors exhibit a deep-seated passion for improving the lives of children and families. Many have become outspoken advocates for improving their profession.

Participating in Taking Charge of Change gave me more confidence. It validated that I am making the right decisions. After TCC I did a lot more consulting and speaking at workshops, which I had never done before. The whole experience of TCC was so positive—I really came out a different person. It gave me confidence, skills, know-how, and just learning how to be a better leader. (Patti Hutton)

Taking Charge of Change is a life-altering and empowering experience. (Martha Owens)

The leadership, instruction, and inspirational lectures changed my life. Taking Charge of Change definitely gave me a new perspective on how to run a quality center. The assessment tools were extremely helpful in giving me a place to start making improvements and the necessity for follow through. Visiting other centers gave me a whole new level to strive for and resources of where to go with questions. It was so helpful to listen to other directors talk about their experiences and what they did to resolve different situations. (Carolyn Yoakum)

The training increased my knowledge base and gave me the confidence to move. I did take charge of myself. I was no longer just doing a job, but doing a job I felt confident I could. I had a fear of going on to get my master's degree and TCC took away my fear. (Jeanette Kreider)

When I first started the McCormick Fellows program I was not very verbal in meetings. Since my experience I have presented at grantee meetings where I used to be intimidated. The training gave me more confidence. (Janice Blackwell)

The training made me a much stronger advocate and spokesperson for the field. It made me revisit and rethink a lot of things I was doing and how to best serve the community. It made me critically analyze my role as the gatekeeper to quality. It definitely helped me to become a stronger leader. (Michael Davey)

I became committed to the idea that early childhood is a profession and we need to educate the public about it. I learned a lot of skills to help me promote this ideal. (Pat Dunn)

Taking Charge of Change gave me the courage to leave [the center] for bigger and better things. (Bridgette Davis)

I wouldn't have survived the role I was in without Taking Charge of Change. (Paula Steffen)

I can't say enough about what I got from the program. It was a turning point in my life. (Sara Starbuck)

I am so grateful to everyone at the Center for all that I have learned and continue to learn. The experiences and the people have helped me become a better director, teacher, and person. (Dawn Soukup)

I've grown tremendously in so many ways as a result of the training. It just opened my eyes to the possibilities in the field of early childhood. My view of field is bigger, and growing all the time. Professionally I felt I had these walls around me and now I feel there are no boundaries. Personally I feel the same way too. (Kathy Hardy)

Personally I have become a much more assertive, skillful, and precise person. I've also learned so much about mentoring. (Jill Moore)

Ten years ago I thought my life was this nice little set schedule I would never get out of it. I had no idea what advocacy was. Believe it or not I was very shy and never felt I could stand up and state my positions forcefully. Now I am involved more in my community. I am a real advocate for what I believe. (Jackie Smizer)

Before Taking Charge of Change I felt very inadequate to perform my job duties. I learned how to handle situations more effectively. (Michele Denton)

Since TCC I've become more confident when speaking with the park and recreation district's upper management. I also became more knowledgeable and confident in supervising my staff. (Mary O'Day)

Taking Charge of Change gave me a renewed confidence about my abilities. I now try to use shared decision making as much as possible to empower the staff. I now have the confidence to do trainings and speak in public at conferences. (Kelly Lopresti)

During the interviews, respondents reflected on how their personal perceptions of themselves had changed as a result of training, how their perceptions of themselves at work had changed, and how their perceptions of themselves as leaders in the field of early childhood had changed. The metaphors they used capture the deeper meaning implicit in these personal reflections of transformation.

My experience in Taking Charge of Change is comparable to sewing a quilt. When I first began to tackle the task of implementing so many changes I

was overwhelmed. I could visualize the beautiful end result, but was reluctant to start. The work ahead seemed so tedious and painstaking. The only way to overcome the fear was to start simple—one square, one stitch at a time. With the beautiful vision firmly planted in my mind. I was able to take on the task—one step at a time. (Suzanne Starble)

I feel more enlightened, more self-assured. Almost like the butterfly coming out of the cocoon. (Karen Welch)

For me Taking Charge of Change was the yeast. You get a little bit of it and with the proper environment it expands. TCC gave me yeast, I've taken that and I've grown. (Mary Pat Martin)

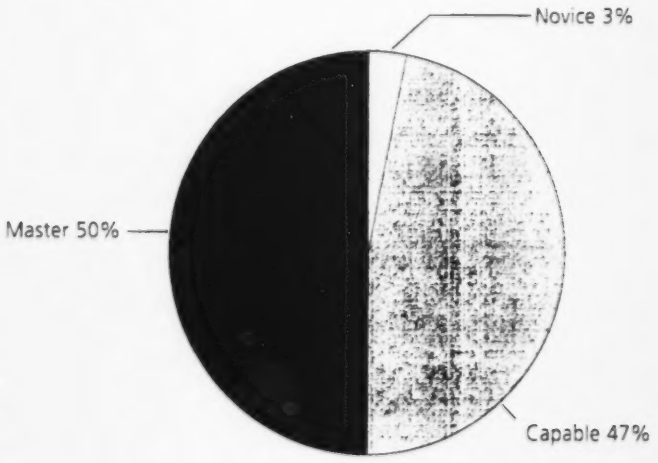
Taking Charge of Change was the cocoon phase to keep me in this game. It enveloped and nurtured me. Now I am a butterfly; I am an advocate for children. Were it not for TCC, I would not be in this profession. (Anita Harvey Dixon)

Interviewees were also asked to note one or two key concepts learned from the training that had impacted them the most in their professional practice. No clear pattern emerged from these responses, indicating that the training was a highly personal experience in the way that key concepts were internalized and the most memorable lessons were recalled. Included were such things as:

- Perception is reality—everyone sees things differently.
- Change is a process not a product.
- Honoring different learning styles is important.
- Collaborative decision making takes time.
- Hiring people who have diverse skill sets is critical.
- Presuming positive intentions is necessary.
- Leadership is more than managing.

Those respondents who are currently directors of center-based programs were asked to indicate their perceived level of competency. Data for respondents who completed their training by 2000 are summarized in Figure 2. This figure shows that one-half of the respondents perceive themselves as master directors. This contrasts sharply with their initial assessment of their competency when they began their leadership training (where 60% rated themselves as capable directors and only 10% perceived they were master directors).

Figure 2. Directors' Perceived Level of Competency



An additional statistical analysis was conducted to discern the background variables that correlate strongly with perceptions of competency. The results of the analysis revealed that perceptions of competency correlate more strongly with level of education than years of experience in the field or years of experience in an administrative role.

Finally, respondents were asked to list two personal or professional achievements they had accomplished as a result of the training that

made them most proud. In the interviews individuals talked about pursuing goals that they previously did not think were possible, but with a heightened sense of self-confidence, personal conviction, and an expanded support system, they felt they could do it. These goals included such things as going back to school, completing a college degree, obtaining the illinois Director Credential, writing an article for publication, and starting a new center.

> *When the Illinois Director Credential pilot began I was first in line because I knew it was important. Having taken TCC helped in creating my portfolio. The seed was planted, I didn't realize how important that initial conversation about IDC was.* (Ann Gadzikowski)

> *I gained the self-confidence to purchase a center and become an owner.* (Cindy Mahr)

> *The training gave me the impetus to become a trainer myself.* (Jayne Carpenter)

> *I came to Taking Charge of Change not sure if I was going to stay as a director. The excitement and the enthusiasm of TCC renewed my enthusiasm. I now teach [early childhood administration courses] in higher education.* (Linda Butkovich)

Organizational changes. In addition to personal perceptions of change, the study also sought to determine if participants were able to translate the theoretical concepts underpinning effective leadership into needed changes in their organizations to improve the quality of services for children and families.

All those completing the survey were asked to describe concrete, specific changes they made in their early childhood programs or in their communities as a result of their participation in the McCormick Leadership Training Program or Taking Charge of Change. Content analysis of the responses to this question revealed four clusters of responses: achieving accreditation, improved staff communication, more effective staff meetings, and more systematic (and comprehensive) staff development.

> *My staff and I were able to be the first center in our agency to achieve NAEYC accreditation. We were able to assist and encourage other centers within our agency to follow our lead. It also helped strengthen my relationship with the school district.* (Janice Blackwell)

> *When I first took part in the training, we had an 84% turnover rate, which is very high. This had a lot to do with communication. Since then, I've improved things a lot. Administration and teaching staff were very separate. I spend a lot of time in the classroom now. Parent interactions with teachers were horrible previously. I did training sessions with teachers and parents on how to communicate more respectfully and problem solve together. Building an administrative team that was strong was the best thing I've done.* (Lisa Asselborn)

> *Learning more about supervision and staff training has become more of a focal point for our center. Through mentoring and staff training we have been able to help staff grow. Several teachers achieved their CDA and associate's degree.* (Cheryl Bulat)

> *My Program Improvement Plan helped to improve the professional development for my current staff. Many are now considering pursuing bachelor's degrees rather than just their associate's degrees.* (Rochelle Golliday)

The impact of TCC extends beyond the year of training. What I started then continues today. (Karen Maurer)

I feel that I learned about so many resources to share with my staff. I also learned new, interesting ways to make meetings more successful and productive. We have certainly improved the staff development for our teachers as a result. (Dawn Soukup)

During the interviews, respondents indicated that the immediate changes that occurred as a result of implementing their Program Improvement Plans (a requirement of the training) often created the momentum and impetus needed to launch bigger and more ambitious program improvement efforts.

My first goal, to be NAEYC accredited, didn't happen in a year's time. So, my Program Improvement Plan became restructuring staff jobs so we had a tiered system of support. Yes, we have made more improvements and sustained staff and attained accreditation. We are still writing grants and trying to continue improvements. The tiered system has also helped create mentoring among staff. (Cheryl Bulat)

As a direct result of TCC, our program has completed the NAEYC self-study process and we are currently waiting for a validation visit. We have also established a collaboration with our school system; they have placed ISBE Pre-K in our center. We are currently working with Head Start and have a verbal commitment for them to come on board in the fall of 2003. Because of TCC, I was able to understand how all entities can work together to make a much stronger early childhood program. (Rhonda Clark)

We needed to improve morale at the center. Our Program Improvement Plan involved converting a closet into a staff lounge. This created a sense of team, which we didn't have before. Teachers need to know they are appreciated. I continue this by occasionally leaving them nice messages, food, or a small gift. We even purchased a little refrigerator and a subscription to Oprah's magazine for the lounge. (Exie Hall)

I was able to go back to the YWCA's child care center, work with staff to identify personality types, team build, and get a mission statement written. The skills I learned also helped me lead a growing professional organization, Fox Valley AEYC. During my presidency we had team-building meetings, full board participation, formation of a leadership award, board retreats for long-range planning, and the largest conference to date. (Linda Bridgeman)

As a result of the training all center staff developed portfolios that were used for annual reviews. In addition, we developed individual training plans for each staff person. A community outreach program with our local police force was also developed and implemented. (Peggy Dohr)

I went on to design a parent resource center for a school district. I also wrote a proposal and secured a large building construction grant as well as many other early childhood grants. (Marcia Orr)

As a participant of the McCormick Fellows Program I leveraged my grant to obtain HUD funding to double the size of my facility, improve the playground, and add a school-age program. (Teri Talan)

An important goal of the training in both models was to introduce the concept of center accreditation and to support directors in making needed quality improvements to achieve accreditation. Table 5 summarizes the data regarding current accreditation status. Of the 106 respondents who are directors of center-based programs, only 21 (20%) report that when they began their leadership training their center was accredited. Currently 46 (43%) of the directors report that their programs are accredited. Only 14 (13%) of the directors in the sample indicate that they are not pursuing accreditation or reaccreditation.

Table 5. Accreditation Status (n = 106)

	f	%
Center accreditation status		
Accredited	46	43
Waiting for validation visit or commission decision	12	11
Engaged in the self-study process	45	42
Deferred	1	1
Pursuing reaccreditation	23	22
Not pursuing accreditation or reaccreditation	14	13

Note: Percentages add up to more than 100% because respondents could indicate more than one category.

Continuing Professional Development

Of keen interest to both those who fund professional development experiences and those who deliver the training is whether or not the experience prompts participants to engage in additional professional development; particularly training that may lead to college credit. Of further interest is the question of whether or not participation in such training impacts participants' decisions to stay in the field.

Enrollment in college courses. On the self-report questionnaire, respondents were asked to indicate if their participation in leadership training had served as a stepping-stone to other professional development opportunities. On a scale of 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree, the mean score for the entire sample (N = 182) was M = 4.30, with slightly higher scores for those who are still directors (M = 4.37) than for those who have left the field (M = 4.04).

Clearly, for many, taking part in these leadership training experiences was the impetus to pursue further formal coursework. In the follow-up interviews, many respondents indicated that having the option of acquiring college credit for their participation in Taking Charge of Change prompted them to want to take other college courses for credit. After feeling successful taking one course, they became interested in furthering their education.

> *Taking Charge of Change was the main influence for going back to school. I had always wanted to move forward but didn't think I was ready. TCC gave me the push.* (Lisa Asselborn)

> *I always wanted to pursue a master's, but getting formal credit for TCC helped push that along.* (Karen Bruning)

> *Before Taking Charge of Change I never thought I'd go back. It was the instructors and what I did in TCC that got me excited and made me want to continue. Now I have a M.Ed. in Early Childhood Administration. TCC kept feeding me and helped me grow. TCC also provided me the opportunity to do a lot of networking.* (Patti Hutton)

> *I was planning on getting my master's, but Taking Charge of Change got me started. The college credits I received from TCC were my first graduate credits to apply toward my degree.* (Pamela Cronkright)

Of those individuals in the sample who do not have an advanced degree, 42% are currently enrolled in a degree program. The majority of those pursuing formal coursework are enrolled in programs related to early childhood certification and early childhood administration.

Another way to document participants' interest in furthering their education is to compare the percentage of individuals with advanced degrees (master's and doctorate) when they were first selected to participate in leadership training and now. A review of the initial applications for the 258 participants in Taking Charge of Change indicates that only 19% held a master's degree or doctorate. Of the 182 respondents in this study, 46% have an advanced degree.

Those not pursuing formal coursework at the undergraduate or graduate level gave several reasons why they are not. The most often cited reasons included the cost of tuition, work demands, and time.

Mentoring others. Along with pursuing formal coursework, professional development involves non-traditional experiences such as coaching or mentoring other colleagues. Participants of both the McCormick Fellows Leadership Training Program and Taking Charge of Change were asked how they supported other directors. All respondents indicated that they mentored other directors informally. Some are part of formal mentor initiatives.

Formally, they described becoming Professional Growth Advisors for the Illinois Director Credential, mentoring others to become credentialed. Additional ways they formally mentor other directors is in orienting newly hired directors in their agencies, presenting on administrative issues at conferences, and serving in a paid consultative role to other directors in their community (e.g., on accreditation issues). Informally, they describe themselves as mentoring other directors by participating in electronic discussion groups and listservs, responding to director colleague questions by telephone and e-mail, providing colleagues with professional resources, motivating and leading others as board members for local professional associations, and networking with other directors across the state or in other states.

Knowledge of professional development resources. In addition to assessing continuing professional development experiences, this study also sought to discern respondents' current level of knowledge about professional development resources. Professional development opportunities in Illinois have increased substantially since the first Taking Charge of Change cohort was offered in 1993. Since that time, the state has launched several initiatives including T.E.A.C.H., Great START, and the Illinois Director Credential (IDC).

The 106 respondents who currently administer early care and education programs were asked to indicate their present level of knowledge about the three professional development initiatives listed above. Table 6 summarizes these results.

Table 6. Level of Knowledge About Different Professional Development Initiatives

Level of knowledge	Initiative					
	Great START		T.E.A.C.H.		IDC	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Haven't a clue	4	4	3	3	0	0
Heard about it	7	7	4	4	6	6
Somewhat knowledgeable	14	14	27	26	29	28
Knowledgeable	35	34	37	36	29	28
Very knowledgeable	43	41	32	31	39	38

Note: n=103, three respondents did not complete this portion of the survey.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

As the data in this table reflect, the directors in this study who have participated in leadership training feel they are fairly knowledgeable about professional development resources in the state. Fully three-fourths of the directors state that they are knowledgeable or very knowledgeable about Great START. Two-thirds state they are knowledgeable or very knowledgeable about T.E.A.C.H. and the Illinois Director Credential.

In the follow-up interviews, a few of the respondents provided details about how they were encouraging their staff to participate in the T.E.A.C.H. and Great START initiatives.

> *Great START and T.E.A.C.H. have been huge in maintaining teaching staff. Almost all of my staff are participating in one or the other (mostly Great START).* (Gigi Bowie)

> *There are four staff members at my center using T.E.A.C.H. scholarships and three more taking classes.* (Karen Maurer)

> *The knowledge I gained at TCC about T.E.A.C.H. and Great START I was able to pass on to my staff. I currently have two staff members working toward their Type 04 certificates, three teachers working toward their early childhood associate degrees, and three more toward their CDAs.* (Rhonda Clark)

Design and Delivery of Training

Administrators of early care and education programs attend a variety of professional development experiences throughout their careers. Many of these experiences are in the field of early childhood, but others are in related fields of business, medicine, law, and social work. The 104 individuals who were interviewed were asked to compare their participation in McCormick Fellows or Taking Charge of Change with other leadership training experiences they have had. Respondents were asked to rate whether the experience was less favorable, about the same, or more favorable than other leadership training experiences they had engaged in. The results of the data analysis indicate that 99 of the 104 respondents (95%) rated the McCormick Fellows Leadership Training Program and Taking Charge of Change as "more favorable." Five individuals rated it "about the same" as other leadership training experiences they had engaged in.

As a follow-up, the 104 individuals who were interviewed were asked what aspects of the training model contributed most to their favorable impressions of the professional development experience. Content analysis of the data surfaced six themes: the collegial support from other participants, focus of the content on the needs of early childhood administrators, the high caliber of presenters, the intensity of the training experience, opportunities for networking, and access to professional resources. In addition, the individuals who had participated in the McCormick Fellows Leadership Training Program also noted two other features—the comprehensive nature of their leadership program and the awarding of a master's degree as an outcome of the professional development experience.

> *The training went into more depth. Most trainings are one-day workshops and you can't get a lot out of them. This training was more comprehensive and allowed for participation.* (Janice Blackwell)

> *Taking Charge of Change was really intense. Staying there [lodging] was especially beneficial. It kept the momentum, helped us bond with others, and provided support. It is tough to be away from family, but it made it very special.* (Dorothy Bertram)

> *Everything I learned was very relevant to what I'm doing at work. I could apply everything. That was the big plus and something you don't always get in training.* (Patti Hutton)

The value of not going it alone and having expert consultation from mentors was an important piece of the training. (Pamela Cronkright)

The way the whole program was set up. You are totally immersed in Taking Charge of Change; you are there all the time, it is intense. (Peggy Dohr)

The length and intensity of the training were invigorating and motivating. (Joni Scritchlow)

The caliber of presenters is unbelievable. Materials and books are great. It is a top-notch thing. (Kathy Hardy)

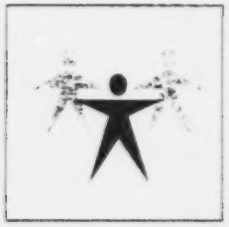
I continue to utilize the resources from TCC with staff and parents in order to enhance the program and make it a higher quality. (Lucy James)

It was an intensive training that allowed people to connect, get in touch with who we are and what we are doing, and network with people sharing similar life issues. Day trainings don't give you that cohesiveness. This makes a huge difference in what you come away with. The follow-up was unique and important. What contributed most was the knowledge and energy of all the people who helped facilitate the program. The Program Improvement Plan and direct application of the concepts were also big contributors to making this a more favorable training. (Karen Bruning)

During the interviews, many of the respondents focused their comments on the structure of the training. Created to allow directors to immerse themselves in learning and reflecting, both the McCormick Fellows and Taking Charge of Change models are intensive and in-depth. The structure and delivery of the training is designed to exemplify the very practices that directors are

encouraged to implement at their centers. As one respondent noted, *"the instructors walk the talk."* Directors mentioned how well they were treated, and commented on "the little things" that were incorporated into the training model to make the experience special. One director mentioned how nurtured she felt in the training environment—with tablecloths on the tables, fresh flowers in the room, background music during breaks, and inspirational quotes on the wall. She realized how valued and appreciated she felt with some simple changes to the environment so she returned to her center and implemented these changes during her staff meetings. As a result, her relations with staff improved.

ZOOMING OUT: WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?



In the previous chapter we've provided a close-up view of the data collected from a self-report questionnaire and follow-up interviews involving 182 early childhood professionals who participated in leadership training over the past ten years. In this chapter we now refocus our lens to look at the big picture and the salient themes that emerge from the data analysis. These themes focus on the potency of training as it relates to participants' role perceptions, job performance, and career decisions.

Role Perceptions

It has been said that leadership starts in the head—it is a way of thinking about oneself in the context of different personal and professional interactions. That certainly appears to be the case with the respondents in this study. Repeatedly, individuals talked about the sense of empowerment they felt when they completed their leadership training and how that heightened sense of self-esteem literally transformed how they thought about their directorship role. These heightened feelings of self-efficacy have been sustained since they completed their training, empowering them to assume new challenges they would perhaps not have had the confidence to do otherwise.

Many of the directors used the metaphor of a caterpillar emerging into a butterfly to describe the personal metamorphosis they experienced during the leadership training. The intensity of these reflections and the gratitude for the "awakening" they experienced were similar for participants in both training models. It appears that when designed to incorporate in-depth, comprehensive, skill-building tools with follow-up, a one-year training experience of approximately 110 contact hours can have as powerful an impact in boosting confidence as a two-year degree program of 480 contact hours.

Data regarding changes in directors' perceptions of personal competency provide strong evidence of this transformation. When directors typically begin Taking Charge of Change, most (90%) rate themselves as a novice or capable director. Only 10% rate themselves as a master director. This study revealed that fully 50% of the directors who completed their training before 2000 now view themselves as master directors. This change in self-perception does not appear to be related to years of experience in the field, but is strongly correlated to educational attainment. The fact that such a high percentage of the participants who took part in this leadership training over the past decade have gone on to achieve an advanced degree has contributed to these heightened feelings of self-efficacy.

Zooming in and out and shifting focus while maintaining position is something leaders must be able to do on many different levels. Leadership training that empowers participants to view themselves from different vantage points strongly impacts role perceptions. Individuals who participated in both training models say the experience gave them a new perspective on their administrative role. The lens through which they previously viewed themselves was limited in scope, concentrating mostly on the details or nitty-gritty management issues of administering a program. The leadership training they took part in gave them the capacity to step back and see the broader view—the vision of what they wanted their programs to become. This helped them see themselves and their programs more clearly in the context of their community and in the context of the early childhood profession. *"My view of the field has certainly broadened,"* states Linda Hatter. *"My view is now more global,"* echoed Sue Staley.

Several of the individuals talked during the interviews about the personal paradigm shift they experienced after completing training that impacted how they spent their time. While they continue to focus on management issues such as balancing the budget or planning a fundraising event, they began to consciously think about broader, more abstract, issues such as envisioning goals, affirming values, motivating staff, and achieving a unity of purpose.

This distinction between management and leadership presents a special problem for trainers. Management issues lend themselves nicely to short-term training; they tend to be focused and skill-based so they can be easily packaged and evaluated. Leadership training is messier and takes longer because it involves fundamental changes in the way people view their role and the overarching principles that guide their behavior. Leadership training is not easily packaged and does not lend itself to clean, precise methods of evaluation. Leadership training involves taking participants to a more abstract level, helping them to be self-reflective and to develop the ability to change perspectives.

Many of the respondents commented on the power of the cohort in helping to shape their role perceptions. As Michele Denton states, *"I learned I was not alone. There are other directors all around the state who face the same issues as me."* Once the training was over, that network of support undoubtedly contributed to helping sustain those initial feelings of empowerment and confidence. This is particularly true for directors in Central and Southern Illinois who often feel isolated. Diane King, a participant from southern Illinois states, *"The chance to develop personal relationships with colleagues in my region and from other areas of the state was invaluable."*

Respondents repeatedly stated how their advocacy efforts had increased as a result of their participation in training. As Fran Calvert lightheartedly stated in her interview, *"I feel like I can walk into any room now and have something intelligent to say."* Although the passion for social justice and supporting children and families was always there, respondents state that their perceptions of themselves as leaders and ardent advocates for children needed to be nurtured. Learning new communication and presentation skills during training and being supported by colleagues and instructors helped bolster their confidence and expand their role to more actively advocate for children, staff, families, and themselves.

Nan Pangarkar was looking to invest in some real estate when she happened upon a child care center for sale. Much to the surprise of her family, Nan decided she wanted a career in early childhood as well as a good investment. Nan's educational qualifications consisted of a bachelor's degree in philosophy and a master's degree in Sanskrit. With a characteristic optimism, Nan enrolled in early childhood classes at the local community college and began her journey in early childhood administration. In 1995, Nan became the director of the Happy Times Education Center in Mt. Vernon, a rural community in Southern Illinois. Today, the center serves 155 children from 6 weeks to 13 years of age.

One year after her purchase, Nan participated in Taking Charge of Change. Nan compares this training experience to yoga, *"When I opened my eyes I was enlightened."* Nan reports that she had been "unconsciously incompetent," operating the center without realizing that some practices were negatively impacting the quality of care. The leadership training gave her a new perspective on her role as an administrator and empowered her to become an advocate for children. Nan no longer accepted things at face value. Instead she began to evaluate the quality of the learning environment and the center as a whole. She became an agent of change. While at first there was resistance from

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

staff, Nan used her newly acquired staff development skills to build the capacity of her staff to improve the center. Nan actively encourages her teachers to further their education. For example, teachers now receive two paid days of leave to study for finals. Nan has also created an exceptional staff library. She purchases the books needed by staff for their college coursework for the staff library so all can benefit.

The changes that came from attending Taking Charge of Change were not limited to Nan's center. Nan credits her TCC experience as *"connecting her to a bigger circle."* She became involved with the early childhood community and began to advocate on behalf of the low-income children and families her program serves. She has served as a board member of the Day Care Action Council of Illinois. Nan describes her TCC experience as *"the beginning of my new career and new life. I had more confidence, because I had knowledge."* Nan considers herself a life-long learner and is currently working on obtaining a master's degree and the Illinois Director Credential, Level III.

Job Performance

A previous 1998 study comparing training outcomes of the one-year Taking Charge of Change leadership training model with the two-year McCormick Fellows training model revealed that director training over longer periods of time with sustained support leads to higher-quality programs.[19] The reason for this was the more comprehensive nature of the training content (34 s.h. of graduate credit) and the focused on-site intervention that the McCormick Fellows model provided. Short-term leadership training programs (i.e., the one-year Taking Charge of Change model) also impact indices of center quality, but the changes are not as broad as the two-year model.

This study did not include independent evaluations of program quality, but rather focused on participants' self-reports of the impact that leadership training on job performance. The data show that respondents strongly agree that leadership training improved their management skills, helped them become more reflective about their leadership behavior, and provided them with concrete resources to perform their jobs better.

Participants noted four clusters of skills that particularly helped them in their management and leadership roles: interpersonal communication skills, group facilitation skills (mostly conducting effective meetings), decision-making skills (particularly participative management), and staff development skills. They provided dozens of examples during the follow-up interviews about how these skills were put into practice every day.

Lester Bell was a site director of a Head Start program when he participated in the Taking Charge of Change Leadership Training. In this role he described himself as *"hands-on in the day-to-day operation of the program. My skills were in administration."* Since that time Lester was promoted to assistant director, responsible for overseeing eleven sites. Currently, Lester serves as the director of educational services. In this new role he does more to help managers than he could as the director of one site. Lester now specializes in enrollment and attendance. He mentors program managers, going from site to site and helping them out by using skills such as listening, mentoring, and empowering that he developed during the training.

One leadership skill that has helped Lester the most is participatory management. *"My degrees are in human*

services and administration. I thought I knew it all, but this training taught me how to manage a day care facility, which I thought I knew. Instead I saw I was operating as a bureaucracy. When I came to Centers for New Horizons, I had an opportunity to change that. Taking Charge of Change enabled me to see I was dictating and not encouraging staff participation. When I returned from TCC I started using the strategies I learned and began to delegate more. Even my staff noticed. I learned that as I asked staff for input, they gave me a lot of good ideas."

Lester also credits the training with giving him new tools in addition to reaffirming what he already knew. *"The training helped me to organize my reading habits. The morning and evening reflections were invaluable for this. Now I find myself regularly doing reflections, asking what is my objective and how am I going to reach my goals? Those concrete things I learned changed me. Now I am very organized. Now I write things down to see, 'how did I do?' Learning to reflect has improved the way I do my job. The study habits and work habits that we were taught have become a part of me. "*

One director stated that her "light bulb moment" during training came during a discussion of communication and work styles. She came to realize the importance of appreciating different personality temperaments in the workplace. She mentioned how she had been having problems getting along with her administrative assistant who had a different work style than she did. Coming back from the training she was able to turn the relationship around because she learned to look beyond herself and to view this interpersonal relationship from a new perspective.

The capacity to appreciate another person's point of view begins with self-awareness, an important component of both training models. Learning about one's communication style, learning style, temperament, and decision-making preferences provides the foundation for understanding others who may have a different style or point of view. *"The training helped me to develop a better attitude and mutual respect for my staff,"* states Roseanne DeGregorio. *"For me, it was listening skills,"* said Susan Levenhagen. *"Being able to truly listen to other people's concerns rather than preach my agenda—it isn't just about me, it's about everyone. It's a team that makes things happen."*

This ability to perform better in the role of director by taking the perspectives of others was repeated again and again by participants during their interviews. *"It's about taking a walk in someone else's shoes,"* said Diane King. This ability to take on new perspectives is an essential piece of implementing shared decision-making and participative management processes. Many of the directors viewed their proudest accomplishment as their ability to let go, not having to be in control of all decisions. Implementing more collaborative decision-making and problem-solving processes was an important goal for many of the respondents—to consider themselves as part of a team rather than always dictating the agenda. *"Before TCC, my style was more top-down,"* said Priscilla Simons. *"I try to avoid that now. My staff is involved from the beginning. Even though it may take longer, everyone has ownership and is valued."*

Many of the respondents indicated that the training revealed just how much they did not know about effective supervision and the dynamics of organizational leadership. This sense of "conscious incompetence" was not a discouraging realization, however. To the contrary, it served as a stimulus to learn more and become more accomplished in their administrative role.

The data comparing critical issues directors faced when they first enrolled in leadership training and those they face now surfaced some surprises. While actual turnover appears to have decreased

31 BEST COPY AVAILABLE

during the past decade, difficulty in recruiting qualified staff remains a nettlesome problem for directors. Inadequate physical space and simply too much paperwork have also been troublesome issues for directors of early care and education programs throughout the past decade. Now it appears the current economic climate may be creating a new set of critical issues for directors to address. One-third of directors cite uncertain funding as a critical administrative issue and 18% note low enrollment as a major concern. For many, these two issues are related. Follow-up conversations with respondents indicate that the economic hardship that tuition-paying parents are experiencing is impacting their child care enrollment decisions. Additionally, eligibility guidelines for subsidized children have also impacted enrollment patterns over the past couple of years.

Tom Layman participated in the McCormick Fellows Leadership Training Program. Already an accomplished center director and community leader, the training enhanced his existing skills. Tom reports that as a result of the leadership training *"My focus shifted from administrative issues to issues of staff development."* Gaining knowledge about organizational change and developing skill at providing individualized staff development, building collaborations, and creating a true team, were instrumental in improving the quality of services provided at North Avenue Day Nursery. *"In the McCormick Fellows Leadership Program one of the most valuable concepts I learned was managing a group to have a vision. Connecting the day-to-day work of staff to a bigger vision was key."* Under Tom's leadership, the center realized its vision and became NAEYC accredited.

While earning a master's degree, Tom had the opportunity to study in depth the historical foundations of the early childhood field. His view of the field as continuously evolving is tied to this history and serves as the backbone of his advocacy efforts to improve public policymaking. Before the leadership training, Tom considered himself an advocate. After participating in the McCormick Fellows Leadership Training Program he describes himself as becoming *"a more effective advocate"* and realizing *"It was time to do something with greater influence."* After 21 years as the executive director of North Avenue Day Nursery, Tom accepted the position as the Executive Director of the Chicago Metro Association for the Education of Young Children. In this new role, Tom promotes the professional development of thousands of early childhood practitioners.

The data regarding changes in accreditation status speak directly to the impact that individuals have had on their centers as a result of their participation in leadership training. Data show that only 20% of the programs were accredited when participants began their training. Today, fully 43% of the current directors' programs are accredited. This contrasts sharply with the overall 10% accredited figure for the state. It is clear the training has an impact on increasing participants' awareness of the importance of accreditation and assisting them with resources and support to make it happen.

Career Decisions

Perhaps the most encouraging data resulting from this study relates to career decisions made by the individuals who have participated in either the McCormick Fellows Leadership Training Program or the Taking Charge of Change Leadership Training Program. Of the 182 respondents in this study, 156 (86%) continue to work in the field of early childhood either as a director of a center-based program or in a

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

related position supporting children and families. Sixty-five percent of this group continues to work for the same organization they worked for when they participated in the training. Fully 97% of the directors of center-based programs see themselves as continuing to work in early childhood five years from now.

Lois Malone, a participant in the first cohort of Taking Charge of Change, is the owner and director of the Malone Day Care Center in Carterville, Illinois. Although she had over twenty years of experience in the field when she enrolled in Taking Charge of Change, Lois says her perspective of the field was really quite narrow. She credits TCC with giving her the confidence to expand her horizons. Since attending TCC, Lois has quite literally been around the world and back. She has participated in five international Early Childhood World Forum conferences and she has presented at the University of Beijing on the Illinois Early Learning Standards.

Lois says the leadership skills she acquired from participating in Taking Charge of Change helped her both personally and professionally. *"Before the training I felt that I was open-minded and embraced change. Soon into the training experience I realized that I wasn't so open to change after all! I would look at changes in the early childhood field and find ways of circumventing them. For example, when I went to TCC I met the DCFS licensing qualifications for a director only because I was 'grandfathered-in' based on my many years of experience. In other words, I didn't have the minimal educational qualifications for a center director. After participating in TCC, I went back home and began taking classes so I would be qualified in my own right and meet all the licensing standards. Now I am working toward a master's degree in Early Childhood Administration. Soon I will be the first child care director in my area (south of Mt. Vernon) to have the Illinois Director Credential."*

The training also put Lois in contact with early childhood practitioners representing diverse program types and educational philosophies. This helped broaden her understanding of the field and her role as an advocate for quality. Once mentored herself, Lois now mentors other directors who have recently opened centers. The leadership training helped Lois find her voice. *"Without the training I would not have been willing to try a lot of new things. I would convince myself I couldn't do it and wouldn't speak up. After the training I felt more confident. I was scared, but I had the confidence and motivation to try. I am now involved at the state level. I am a District Coordinator for the Day Care Action Council of Illinois and serve on the state board for ILAEYC. I would never have been confident enough in my ability to do those things without the TCC leadership training. TCC helped me step out of the box and see I could do more and go farther."*

Half of the individuals who are not currently directing a program but continue to work in the field, left their previous position either because of a desire for greater influence or the need for greater challenge. This group is also deeply committed to the profession; with 93% of them reporting that they see themselves working in early childhood five years from now. While more than two-thirds of those working in the field indicated that their participation in leadership training had a positive influence on their decision to stay in the field, other variables clearly impact individuals' career decision making.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

34

Of the 26 people who left the field of early childhood, 15 of them retired, had an illness, or are taking a hiatus from full-time employment to raise young children. Framed in the context of an early childhood profession where annual turnover across the country still hovers around 30%, this picture of workforce stability in Illinois presents a very promising development.

An equally promising development is the number of individuals who have gone on to take additional college coursework. Only 19% of the respondents had an advanced degree when they enrolled in the leadership training; 46% currently have a master's or doctorate. Forty-two percent of those with associate or bachelor's degrees report that they are enrolled in a degree program. Virtually all of the participants indicated that their leadership training experience served as a stepping-stone to other professional development opportunities.

For participants in the leadership training programs described in this report, networking has been the catalyst for career growth and ongoing professional development. One of the strong features of Taking Charge of Change, for example, is that it brings together directors from different geographic regions of the state and from different program types (private for-profit, corporate-sponsored, independent nonprofit, agency-affiliated, faith-based, Head Start, public-school sponsored, hospital-based, university-affiliated). During the follow-up interviews, many respondents remarked that the networking that happens when directors from such diverse program types come together creates a truly synergistic effect. Illinois is rare in this regard. In many other states, participation in training is segmented by funding source (e.g., Head Start).

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

A FINAL WORD

Participants' reflections at the culmination of the leadership training programs revealed how they had grown personally and professionally through this educational experience. Directors reported heightened feelings of self-esteem and greater self-confidence in their ability to implement change and actively advocate for staff, children, and families. They articulated that the gap between theory and practice has been narrowed as a result of their participation in leadership training and that the training provided them with the opportunity to refine their knowledge base and expand their repertoire of administrative skills. Overwhelmingly, directors state how their perceptions of themselves, their work, and their role in the early childhood profession were enhanced.

The rich empirical and anecdotal evidence received from respondents provides compelling evidence of how leadership training can change the early childhood profession from the inside out and from the bottom up, through changes in early childhood educators themselves. The results of this study underscore the need for systematic, intensive, and relevant training focused on the unique needs of early childhood directors. It also provides a better understanding of what systemic and structural supports are needed to improve the stability of the workforce and maintain the quality improvements.

ENDNOTES

1. Bennis, W. (1989). *On becoming a leader.* New York: Addison Wesley Publishing.

   Burns, J. J. (1978). *Leadership.* New York: Harper & Row.

   Collins, J. (2001). *Good to great: Why some companies make the leap... and others don't.* New York: HarperCollins.

   Covey, S. (1991). *Principle-centered leadership.* New York: Fireside Books.

   Deal, T., & Peterson, K., (1999). *Shaping school culture: The heart of leadership.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

   Kouzes, J., & Posner, B. (2002). *Leadership challenge.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

   Smith, S. C., & Piele, P. (1997). *School leadership: Handbook for excellence.* Eugene, OR: ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management.

   Yukl, G. A. (1998). *Leadership in organizations (4th ed.).* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

2. Bloom, P. J. (1992, Spring). The child care center director: A critical determinant of program quality. *Educational Horizons, 70,* 138-145.

   Bloom, P. J. (1997, Summer). Leadership: Defining the elusive. *Leadership Quest,* 12-15.

   Culkin, M. L. (Ed.). (2000). *Managing quality in young children's programs: The leader's role.* New York: Teacher's College Press.

   Kagan, S. L., & Bowman, B. (Eds.). (1997). *Leadership in early care and education.* Washington, DC: NAEYC.

   Rodd, J. (1994). *Leadership in early childhood: The pathway to professionalism.* New York: Teachers College Press.

   Sciarra, D. J., & Dorsey, A. G. (2002). *Leaders and supervisors in child care programs.* Albany, NY: Delmar.

3. Bloom, P. J., & Sheerer, M. (1992). The effect of leadership training on child care program quality. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly,* 7(4), 579-594.

   Bloom, P. J. (1990). The early childhood center director: Policy perspectives on increasing requisite qualifications. *Early Education and Development, 1*(3), 185-204.

   Bloom, P. J. (1989). *The Illinois Directors' Study.* Springfield, IL: Illinois Department of Children and Family Services.

   Bloom, P. J., Rafanello, D., Eisenberg, E., & Talan, T. (1998). *Early childhood leadership training: Taking Charge of Change—Evaluation Report, Cohorts #1- #5.* Wheeling, IL: The Center for Early Childhood Leadership, National-Louis University.

   Bloom, P. J., Rafanello, D., Eisenberg, E., & Britz, J. (1997). *The McCormick Fellows Leadership Training Program—Evaluation Report.* Wheeling, IL: The Center for Early Childhood Leadership.

   The Center for Early Childhood Leadership. (1998, Fall). Investment in directors' training yields big payoffs. *Research Notes.* Wheeling, IL: The Center for Early Childhood Leadership, National-Louis University.

4. The term *professional development* is often confusing because it is used as both a noun and a verb. As a noun, it refers to the transformational process of personal growth that over time expands one's knowledge base and builds new competencies. It is, in essence, the personal change that results from reflecting on experience. As a verb, professional development refers to the actual activities and experiences that individuals engage in to enhance their repertoire of professional skills. In this sense, professional development can be viewed as a synonym for training—allocating resources, setting expectations, and providing opportunities for individuals to engage in experiences that will result in personal growth or change (i.e., professional development as a noun).

Similarly, it is important to clarify the distinction between training and education. In a technical sense, *training* refers to specific information and skill development that enable an individual to do a specific job in a specific setting. It focuses on "how to" more than "why." Education, on the other hand, is concerned with providing individuals with a broad perspective, a conceptual base for framing information and solving problems. The leadership training described in this report is a blend of both orientations and the term "training" is used to encompass both philosophical bases.

5. Training for the McCormick Fellows Cohort #1 began December 1994 and culminated December 1996. The individuals in this cohort received an M.Ed. in Early Childhood Leadership and Advocacy (32 s.h.). Training for Cohort #2 began December 1997 and continued for 24 months until December 1999. The individuals in this second cohort received an M.Ed. in Early Childhood Administration (34 s.h.).

6. Over the past decade, funding for Taking Charge of Change has been received from the following organizations, agencies, and foundations: The American Business Collaboration for Quality Dependent Care (Work/Family Directions), the Chicago Community Trust, Fel/Pro Mecklenburger Foundation, the Field Foundation, the Illinois Department of Human Services, and the McCormick Tribune Foundation.

7. The framework for evaluating the outcomes of the leadership training models described in this report has been developed from the seminal work of Donald Kirkpatrick (1959) and more recently updated and expanded by Thomas Guskey (1998, 2000). The evaluation framework includes four levels of evaluation: Level 1—Participants' reactions to the training; Level 2—Participants' learning including changes in knowledge, skill, and beliefs; Level 3—Behavioral changes on the job; and Level 4—Changes in organizational quality.

Guskey, T. R. (2000). *Evaluating professional development*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Guskey, T. R. (1998, Fall). The age of our accountability. *Journal of Staff Development*, 36-44.

Kirkpatrick, D. L. (1959). Techniques for evaluation training programs. *Training and Development*, 13(11).

8. Great START (Strategy to Attract and Retain Teachers) is a wage supplement program designed to improve the developmental outcomes of children through the professional development of early childhood practitioners. It is available to assistant teachers, teachers, and directors in licensed child care centers, family group homes, and family child care homes. T.E.A.C.H. (Teacher Education and Compensation Helps) is a scholarship and compensation project designed to help child care professionals obtain funding for college coursework or tuition. The Illinois Director Credential (IDC) is a voluntary credential for center-based early childhood directors, administered by the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies.

9. Telephone calls were made to several individuals who did not return the questionnaire to discern if these nonrespondents as a group were different than respondents. A few of these individuals indicated that they did not recall receiving the questionnaire; most indicated that time pressures prevented them from completing the survey. Telephone calls were also made to several individuals who had returned their questionnaires but did not indicate that they wished to be interviewed. These individuals all indicated time pressures as their reason for not being interviewed.

10. Bloom, P. J., Rafanello, D., Eisenberg, E., & Talan, T. (1998). *Early childhood leadership training: Taking Charge of Change—Evaluation Report, Cohorts #1- #5*. Wheeling, IL: The Center for Early Childhood Leadership, National-Louis University.

Bloom, P. J., Rafanello, D., Eisenberg, E., & Britz, J. (1997). *The McCormick Fellows Leadership Training Program—Evaluation Report*. Wheeling, IL: The Center for Early Childhood Leadership, National-Louis University.

The Center for Early Childhood Leadership. (1998, Fall). Investment in directors' training yields big payoffs. *Research Notes*. Wheeling, IL: The Center for Early Childhood Leadership, National-Louis University.

APPENDIX A

Leadership Training Models

McCormick Fellows Leadership Training Program

The McCormick Fellows Leadership Training Program was designed to expand the repertoire of management and leadership skills of center directors who serve a high percentage of low-income families. Funded by the McCormick Tribune Foundation, the unique feature of this training model was its focus on center accreditation as a vehicle for upgrading the quality of program services. Participants received a quality enhancement grant for their centers and on-site technical assistance from a field supervisor as they implemented the policies, procedures, and instructional practices that would help their center achieve accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

Another unique feature of this model was the comprehensive nature of the curriculum and the awarding of a M.Ed. in Early Childhood Administration at the completion of the professional development experience. The candidates selected as McCormick Fellows were chosen because of their potential to become strong advocates for young children and families. Training took place over two years; Cohort #1 1994 - 1996, Cohort #2 1997-1999. Each cohort had 15 participants.

Instruction was conducted in a seminar-like atmosphere using a variety of formats including lectures and formal presentations, informal large-group discussions, small-group experiences, videotaping, and role-playing exercises. Two full-time faculty members at National-Louis University served as core and research instructors. In addition, approximately 25 guest instructors presented sessions on specialized topics related to their areas of expertise.

Field supervisors worked one-on-one with all 30 programs from both cohorts to help improve the quality of the programs and increase the number of early childhood programs in the Chicago area that are accredited by NAEYC. The field supervisors conducted class sessions on NAEYC center accreditation, facilitated networking and mentoring among participants, conducted site observations, facilitated staff and parent meetings, conducted staff development workshops, and worked closely with the participants, guiding them through all phases of the accreditation self-study process.

The curriculum of the McCormick Fellows Leadership Training Program provided a comprehensive study of the theoretical and practical issues involved in establishing and administering early childhood and family service programs. The following is a list of the courses comprising the 34 s.h. sequence for Cohort #2. (The course titles were slightly different for Cohort #1, but the content was essentially the same.)

- Individual and Organizational Perspectives on Adult Development
- Technology in Child Care Administration
- Grantwriting and Fundraising for Early Childhood Programs
- Strategies for Supervision and Staff Development
- Organizational Theory, Group Dynamics, and Leadership Applications
- Historical and Philosophical Foundations of Early Childhood Education
- Contemporary Survey of Child Development
- Early Childhood Curriculum
- Early Childhood Program Evaluation
- Child, Family, and Community
- Perspectives on Contemporary Issues in Education
- Financial and Legal Aspects of Child Care Management
- Introduction to Graduate Research
- Research for Teachers

The curriculum was problem-centered and site-specific. Examples used during class presentations all related to real issues and concerns

that participants faced in their work settings. Thus, training did not focus on theory alone, but weaved theory into the idiosyncratic issues that confronted the directors in their professional roles. As part of the training, each participant wrote a grant proposal targeting requested monies to specified program improvements they hoped to make over the course of the 24-month training cycle. All of the grant proposals were funded.

Throughout the program, emphasis was given to the integration of field experiences and the development of skills for educational research. Students designed and implemented a research study that built on previous research and enhanced competence in their professional role. The participants in this program were presented with conceptions of organizational life not often addressed in their undergraduate professional preparation or daily practice. They looked at their programs as social systems, examining shared norms, values, expectations, and the pivotal role they play in influencing the direction of program practices.

Taking Charge of Change Leadership Training

Taking Charge of Change is a 10-month leadership training program that focuses on the nature of the individual, organizational, and systemic change and the early childhood leader's role as a change agent. A comprehensive, integrated model for improving the quality of early childhood programs is presented during the training cycle and participants implement a program improvement plan to enhance the quality of their early childhood programs.

Over the past ten years, cohort groups have ranged in size from 24 - 30 participants. Candidates are chosen for their demonstrated commitment to improving the quality of care and education of young children, their interest in meeting the quality criteria set forth by NAEYC, their leadership potential, and their ability to effect organizational and systemic change. Effort is made to ensure that each cohort represents the geographic diversity of Illinois as well as the cultural, ethnic, and racial diversity of the early childhood workforce.

The training begins with a six-day summer residential institute. Participants meet again for two three-day retreats in November and May. In all, participants receive approximately 110 clock hours of instruction and technical assistance. A core team of five instructors oversees instruction with the use of several more resource instructors with specialized expertise in different areas. The mentors used in Taking Charge of Change are graduates of the training themselves, so they know first hand the real-life issues that directors face on a daily basis.

The logistics of the training encourage collegial support and networking. For example, the training model has been designed to foster what some participants refer to as a "cross-fertilization" of the field. By bringing together directors from both the for-profit and nonprofit sectors, representing a variety of program types (e.g., Head Start, faith-based, military, public-school sponsored), participants come to appreciate the diversity of the field and increase their access to many different types of professional resources. In addition, housing for the summer institutes and retreats is made possible for all participants so they can immerse themselves in the training experience.

Prior to the summer institute, each participant is interviewed and an in-depth needs assessment is conducted. The case studies used during the training are drawn from the critical incident scenarios and the program profiles that participants complete as part of the needs assessment interviews. The case studies used during training thus draw on both generic themes that cut across the different types of programs as well as specific examples that highlight the unique issues inherent to individual programs. As a result of the needs assessment, the content of the trainings is modified slightly to accommodate the diverse needs of each group of directors.

In addition, an organizational climate assessment is conducted for those directors who want a Work Environment Profile. These profiles are used as an instructional tool to guide program improvement

efforts and as baseline data to document the overall effectiveness of the training as measured by employee perceptions of the quality of work life at their centers.

Based on the principles of adult development and experiential learning, training is conducted in a seminar-like atmosphere using a variety of training formats including formal presentations, large-group discussions, small-group experiences, role-playing, and videotaping. At the culmination of the training cycle, participants receive six semester hours of college credit for two courses: Strategies for Supervision and Staff Development; and Organizational Theory, Group Dynamics, and Leadership Applications.

Directors leave the training with concrete, applicable strategies to bring back to their programs to implement. Once back at their centers, they continue their professional development with regular self-reflections, meetings with their mentors, and periodic discussions on a Web site discussion forum with other members of their cohort.

Throughout the 10-month training cycle, emphasis is given to the integration of field experiences. Participants look at their programs as social systems, examine shared norms, values, expectations, and the pivotal role they play in influencing the direction of program practices. The field experience component of the training is premised on the belief that immediate application of new learning to real life situations reinforces what is learned. During the supervised field experience, participants have an opportunity to implement a Program Improvement Plan. At the culmination of training, directors document the results of their efforts in an oral videotaped presentation.

A unique feature of Taking Charge of Change is the assignment of a mentor to each participant. Mentors meet with their mentees during the summer institute and the follow-up retreats. In addition, they make on-site visits, set-up regional group mentee meetings, provide technical assistance via telephone and e-mail, and review written reflections from their mentees. Mentors are also provided with their own professional development experiences during the year and contribute to the *Time Out* discussion forum on the Center for Early Childhood Leadership Web site.

APPENDIX B

The Center for
Early Childhood Leadership

November 18, 2002

Dear Taking Charge of Change Participant:

Greetings! We are happy to send you our 2003 planning calendar. Can you believe we are now in our 10th cohort of Taking Charge of Change? This important milestone is both cause for celebration and the perfect opportunity for us to connect with you to see what you've been doing since you participated in TCC. We are pleased that the McCormick Tribune Foundation and the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) have funded us to learn more about the impact of leadership training on your career decisions and the programs you administrate. Whether you are still working in early childhood or have chosen a different career path, we want to hear from you. We need your help in a couple of ways.

- First, please take 10 minutes to complete this questionnaire and return it to us in the enclosed preaddressed envelope by December 10, 2002. Be assured the information shared on this survey is confidential. Data will be reported in group averages and trends. At the end of the survey indicate if you would be willing to take part in a 20-minute telephone interview to discuss the impact of Taking Charge of Change on your career decisions. Regardless of where you now work, we hope you'll take this opportunity to share with us the joys and frustrations you've experienced in your career, the leadership lessons you gleaned from training, and any recommendations you have for how we can better serve early childhood leaders in Illinois.
- Second, please help us update our database by checking the identifying information on the enclosed blue card. In addition, we hope you will help us track down some TCC participants that we've lost track of. Check the list of missing members (located on the back of the blue card) and add any contact information you can provide.

The findings from this study will be compiled into a short monograph and released at a special event honoring all TCC participants prior to the 2003 Leadership Connections conference. As a token of our appreciation for your participation in the study, you will be entered in a raffle for a $100 gift certificate from Amazon.com. In addition, if you attend our "TCC Reunion" the evening of Wednesday, May 7, 2003, you will receive a $25 voucher that you can apply toward your Leadership Connections hotel expenses.

If you have any questions about the survey, please contact Jill Bella by e-mail (jbella@nl.edu) or telephone, (800) 443-5522, ext. 7706. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Paula Jorde Bloom
Director

Jill Bella
Research Associate

Leadership Impact Survey

Please check the box that best reflects your current career status and then complete the parts of the survey indicated.

	PART
❑ If you no longer work in the field of early childhood, complete . . .	A, C, F
❑ If you work in the field of early childhood, but not as a director at a center, complete . . .	A, B, F
❑ If you work as a director in a center-based program, complete . . .	A, B, D, E, F

Part A. About You

Name: _____
(First) (Middle/Maiden) (Last)

Phone: (____)_____

What center/organization do you currently work for?

_____

Is this the same center/organization you worked for when you attended Taking Charge of Change? ❑ No ❑ Yes

What is your current job title?
(Indicate the **one** job title that best represents your role)

- ❑ Center director
- ❑ Assistant director
- ❑ Consultant/Trainer
- ❑ Education coordinator
- ❑ Lead teacher
- ❑ Owner
- ❑ Teacher
- ❑ Other _____

What was your job title when you attended Taking Charge of Change?
(Indicate only **one** job title)

- ❑ Center director
- ❑ Assistant director
- ❑ Consultant/Trainer
- ❑ Education coordinator
- ❑ Lead teacher
- ❑ Owner
- ❑ Teacher
- ❑ Other _____

How many years experience do you have working in the field of early childhood? _____ years

How many years experience do you have working in an early childhood administrative role? _____ years

Age _____ **Gender** ❑ male ❑ female

Ethnicity

- ❑ African American
- ❑ Asian
- ❑ Caucasian
- ❑ Hispanic/Latino
- ❑ Native American
- ❑ Other _____

Educational Background (Indicate the highest degree you have achieved)

- ❑ High school diploma/GED
- ❑ Associate's degree Major _____
- ❑ Bachelor's degree Major _____
- ❑ Master's degree Major _____
- ❑ Advanced or doctoral degree Major _____

Are you currently enrolled in a degree program?
❑ No ❑ Yes, describe _____

Part B. About Your Career Decisions

How many job changes have you made since attending Taking Charge of Change? _____ changes

If you have made a job change, what factors impacted your decision to change jobs? *(Please indicate the **two** most influential reasons for changing jobs)*

- ❑ better benefits
- ❑ better work schedule
- ❑ center closed
- ❑ demotion/dismissal
- ❑ health/medical
- ❑ increase in salary
- ❑ move/relocation
- ❑ parenthood
- ❑ desire for greater influence
- ❑ disillusionment with organization
- ❑ need for greater challenge
- ❑ personal reasons
- ❑ stress/burnout
- ❑ retirement
- ❑ Other _____

Do you see yourself working in the field of early childhood five years from now? ❑ No ❑ Yes

Part C. About Your Decision to Leave the Field

What considerations prompted your career exit? *(Indicate the **two** most influential reasons for leaving the early childhood field)*

- ❑ better benefits
- ❑ better work schedule
- ❑ center closed
- ❑ demotion/dismissal
- ❑ health/medical
- ❑ increase in salary
- ❑ move/relocation
- ❑ parenthood
- ❑ desire to pursue other interests
- ❑ disillusionment with organization
- ❑ disillusionment with field
- ❑ need for greater challenge
- ❑ stress/burnout
- ❑ retirement
- ❑ Other _____

Part D. About Your Center

Check the **one** category that best describes your current center:

- ❑ for-profit private proprietary or partnership
- ❑ for-profit corporation or chain (e.g., Kindercare, Children's World, LaPetit Academy)
- ❑ for-profit corporate-sponsored (e.g., Bright Horizons Family Solutions)
- ❑ private nonprofit (independent or affiliated with a social service agency, community center, hospital)
- ❑ public nonprofit sponsored by public school or federal/state/local government
- ❑ faith-based
- ❑ Head Start
- ❑ military-sponsored
- ❑ university or college affiliated

What is the current total student enrollment at your center? (Part-time and full-time) _____ children

How many staff are currently employed at your center?

_____ administrative staff _____ teaching staff _____ support staff

How many **teaching staff** have left your center during the past 12 months? _____

Check the categories that describe your center's accreditation status:

- ❑ accredited
  Name of accrediting body:_____
  Expiration date:_____
- ❑ waiting for a validation visit or commission decision
- ❑ engaged in the self-study process
- ❑ deferred
  Name of accrediting body:_____
- ❑ pursuing reaccreditation
- ❑ not pursuing accreditation or reaccreditation

Part E. About Your Administrative Role

If you are currently a director, please check the one phrase that you feel best describes your level of competency:

I am a . . . ❑ novice director ❑ capable director ❑ master director

On a scale of 1 - 5, indicate your level of knowledge about the following professional development initiatives in Illinois

1 = haven't a clue
2 = heard about it
3 = somewhat knowledgeable
4 = knowledgeable
5 = very knowledgeable

_____ Great START
_____ T.E.A.C.H
_____ The Illinois Director Credential (IDC)

What were the **two** most critical issues you confronted in your program when you were a participant in Taking Charge of Change?

❑ community violence
❑ inadequate physical space
❑ staff turnover
❑ low enrollment
❑ too much paperwork
❑ other: _____
❑ difficulty recruiting qualified staff
❑ lack of support from supervisor/agency
❑ lack of parent involvement/support
❑ lack of board support
❑ uncertain funding

What were the **two** most critical issues you confront in your administrative role today?

❑ community violence
❑ inadequate physical space
❑ staff turnover
❑ low enrollment
❑ too much paperwork
❑ other: _____
❑ difficulty recruiting qualified staff
❑ lack of support from supervisor/agency
❑ lack of parent involvement/support
❑ lack of board support
❑ uncertain funding

Part F. About Your Experience in Taking Charge of Change

If you are currently a director, please check the one phrase that you feel best describes your level of competency:

Share your perceptions about the following:	Strongly disagree				Strongly agree
As a result of the training, my leadership and management skills improved.	1	2	3	4	5
As a result of the training, I felt more confident in my administrative role.	1	2	3	4	5
As a result of the training, I became more self-reflective about my leadership behavior.	1	2	3	4	5
The training provided me with concrete resources to perform my job better.	1	2	3	4	5
The training served as a stepping-stone to other professional development opportunities.	1	2	3	4	5
The training had a positive influence on my decision to stay in the field.	N/A	1	2	3	4	5

As a result of Taking Charge of Change, what concrete, specific changes were you able to make in your program or community?

_____

_____

Since completing Taking Charge of Change, what **two** personal or professional achievements have you accomplished that you are most proud of?

1. _____
2. _____

Would you be willing to participate in a 20-minute telephone interview to talk more about your career decisions? ❑ No ❑ Yes
If you answered yes, we will contact you to schedule an interview.

Thank you for taking time to complete this survey. Please return by 12/10/02.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

APPENDIX C

Interview questions for those who are no longer working in the field of early childhood

1. Review the individual's responses on the questionnaire regarding their reason(s) for leaving the field of early childhood. Confirm the date of exit. Discuss the overlap or similarities with their current position.

2. Have you remained in contact with anyone from your cohort?

   ❑ No ❑ Yes

   - If yes, share with me about those contacts (who are they? What is your relationship/how do you interact—personal, professional, etc.?)

3. How would you compare your participation in TCC with other leadership training experiences you have had?

   ❑ less favorable
   ❑ about the same
   ❑ more favorable

   - If your experience was rated "more favorable" than other training experiences, what aspect(s) of the training model contributed most to your favorable impressions of this professional development experience?

   - If your experience was rated "less favorable," why? What would you suggest as changes in the design of the training that might make it more meaningful?

4. What are one or two key concepts or memorable lessons you learned from the training that have impacted you the most in your professional practice?

5. Have you pursued formal coursework at the undergraduate or graduate level since participating in TCC?

   - If no, what are the reasons for not pursuing formal coursework?
   - If yes, did you enroll in a degree program? ❑ no ❑ yes
   - If yes, did participation in TCC influence your decision to pursue a degree? ❑ no ❑ yes
   - If yes, has the coursework been in the area of leadership and management? ❑ no ❑ yes

6. Since Taking Charge of Change, have you had the opportunity to mentor other directors?

   ❑ no ❑ yes

   - Can you provide some examples?

7. How would you describe how you've changed, your work has changed, and your view of the field has changed as a result of participating in the training?

   - Can you think of a metaphor to describe this change?

Interview questions for those who are no longer a director but working in the field of early childhood

1. Review the individual's responses on the questionnaire regarding their change of jobs. Talk about the new position they hold. How is it similar or different to their previous position?

   - Do you consider this new position a career advancement?
     ❑ No ❑ Yes
     If yes, why?

2. How would you characterize the transition of leadership at your center when you left? Why?

   1 2 3 4 5
   Chaotic/Disorganized Extremely Smooth

3. Have you remained in contact with anyone from your cohort?
   ❑ No ❑ Yes

   - If yes, share with me about those contacts (who are they? What is your relationship/how do you interact-personal, professional, etc.?)

4. What specific leadership skills did you acquire in your participation in TCC that have helped you most in your personal and professional life?

5. Review the response on the question about concrete specific changes made in their program or community and get additional information if needed.

6. What are one or two key concepts or memorable lessons you learned from the training that have impacted you the most in your professional practice?

7. How would you compare your participation in TCC with other leadership training experiences you have had?

   ❑ less favorable ❑ about the same ❑ more favorable

   - If your experience was rated "more favorable" than other training experiences, what aspect(s) of the training model contributed most to your favorable impressions of this professional development experience?
   - If your experience was rated "less favorable," why? What would you suggest as changes in the design of the training that might make it more meaningful?

8. Have you pursued formal coursework at the undergraduate or graduate level since participating in TCC?

   - If no, what are the reasons for not pursuing formal coursework?
   - If yes, did you enroll in a degree program? ❑ no ❑ yes
   - If yes, did participation in TCC influence your decision to pursue a degree? ❑ no ❑ yes
   - If yes, has the coursework been in the area of leadership and management? ❑ no ❑ yes

9. Since Taking Charge of Change, have you had the opportunity to mentor other center directors? Can you provide some examples?

10. How would you describe how you've changed, your work has changed, and your view of the field has changed as a result of participating in the training?

    - Can you think of a metaphor to describe this change?

Interview questions for those who are currently the director of a center-based program

1. Can you describe what you did for your Program Improvement Plan?
   - Have you been able to sustain the improvements you made? If not, what obstacles have you encountered?

2. Was your center accredited when you participated in TCC?
   ❑ No ❑ Yes
   - Is it now? ❑ No ❑ Yes
   - If no, why not/what is preventing you?

3. Confirm the total number of teaching staff and percent annual turnover. How many teaching staff have left their center in the last 24 months? _____
   Do you consider this a high or low turnover rate?
   What factors do you think have contributed to your low (or high) turnover rate?

4. What specific leadership skills did you acquire in your participation in TCC that have helped you most in your personal and professional life?

5. Review the response to the question about concrete specific changes made in their program or community and get additional information if needed.

6. Have you remained in contact with anyone from your cohort?
   ❑ No ❑ Yes
   - If yes, share with me about those contacts (who are they? What is your relationship/how do you interact—personal, professional, etc.?)

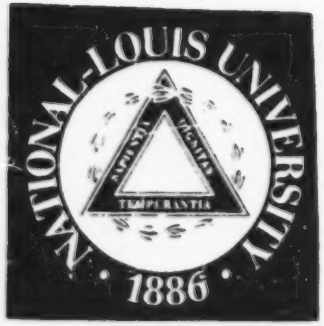
7. How would you compare your participation in TCC with other leadership training experiences you have had?
   ❑ less favorable ❑ about the same ❑ more favorable
   - If your experience was rated "more favorable" than other training experiences, what aspect(s) of the training model contributed most to your favorable impressions of this professional development experience?
   - If your experience was rated "less favorable," why? What would you suggest as changes in the design of the training that might make it more meaningful?

8. What are one or two key concepts or memorable lessons you learned from the training that have impacted you the most in your professional practice?

9. Have you pursued formal coursework at the undergraduate or graduate level since participating in TCC?
   - If no, what are the reasons for not pursuing formal coursework?
   - If yes, did you enroll in a degree program? ❑ no ❑ yes
   - If yes, did participation in TCC influence your decision to pursue a degree? ❑ no ❑ yes
   - If yes, has the coursework been in the area of leadership and management? ❑ no ❑ yes

10. Since Taking Charge of Change, have you had the opportunity to mentor other center directors? Can you provide some examples?

11. How would you describe how you've changed, your work has changed, and your view of the field has changed as a result of participating in the training?
    - Can you think of a metaphor to describe this change?



The Center for
Early Childhood Leadership

6310 Capitol Drive • Wheeling, IL 60090
800-443-5522, ext. 7703 • Fax: 847-465-5910
www.nl.edu/cecl

...supporting directors as the gatekeepers to quality

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

NOTICE

Reproduction Basis

X	This document is covered by a signed "Reproduction Release (Blanket)" form (on file within the ERIC system), encompassing all or classes of documents from its source organization and, therefore, does not require a "Specific Document" Release form.
	This document is Federally-funded, or carries its own permission to reproduce, or is otherwise in the public domain and, therefore, may be reproduced by ERIC without a signed Reproduction Release form (either "Specific Document" or "Blanket").

ED 031994